



Frequently Asked Questions About the City's Response to the 2015 Drought



In response to the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Resolution calling on all cities and water companies to institute measures to reduce water use by 30%, the Morgan Hill City Council declared a Level 2 Water Supply Shortage on April 1, 2015. This document answers many frequently asked questions about the drought in Morgan Hill.

What are the new rules related to the drought? The following new rules were instituted by the Level 2 declaration:

- Irrigation schedules are limited. For the months of April - October, irrigation shall occur two days a week only:
 - Mondays and Thursdays for odd numbered addresses and for properties without a street address
 - Tuesdays and Fridays for even numbered addresses
 - For the months of November - March, irrigation is limited to Wednesdays only.
- Washing down of sidewalks, driveways, and other hard surfaces is prohibited unless it is strictly for safety or sanitary purposes
- All water leaks shall be repaired within two days
- Filling or refilling ornamental lakes or ponds with potable water is prohibited, except to the extent needed to sustain aquatic life, provided that such animals are of significant value and have been actively managed within the water feature prior to the declaration of a Level 2 shortage
- Using water to wash or clean a vehicle, including but not limited to, any automobile, truck, van, bus, motorcycle, boat or trailer, whether motorized or not, is prohibited except at a commercial car washing facility that utilizes a recirculating water system to capture or reuse water - water may be used, however, to clean a vehicle's windows and mirrors
- Refilling of more than one foot and the initial filling of residential swimming pools or outdoor spas with potable water is prohibited

Are there other rules in place? Yes, the City has a number of permanent limitations on water use that are always in effect. These address thirteen specific areas and are listed on the attached sheet. The most commonly referenced three rules are:

1. Irrigation is prohibited between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
2. Sprinklers shall be set to not run more than fifteen minutes per day.
3. Irrigation shall not cause excessive flow or runoff to go onto the sidewalk or into the gutter.

What about drip irrigation....can it be set for over fifteen minutes? Yes. High efficiency irrigation systems, like drip, are not limited to fifteen minute per day run times. These systems must not run between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. and may also operate on any day of the week.

Why was this watering schedule chosen? The City chose two days that are evenly spaced apart and wouldn't interfere with weekend yard maintenance. Similarly, Wednesdays were chosen for the Fall and Winter months to avoid interfering with weekend yard maintenance.

If I plant new plants on the weekend, can I water them? Yes. The irrigation rules do not apply to irrigating by hand whether by a hose or bucket. Residents planting new plants on a weekend day can water them by hand and still be in compliance with the City's ordinance.

Do businesses have to comply? Yes, absolutely. All users of City water must comply.

Can I fill my pool? If you already own a pool, you may add water as long as the amount added is less than 12 inches. The initial filling of a pool is prohibited as well as the refilling of a pool greater than 12 inches.

Can I wash my car? Not at home using water. Using a local commercial car wash facility that recycles its water is recommended. The use of water to clean just the windows, windshields, and mirrors of a vehicle is permitted.

My neighbor is wasting water. What should I do? While residents can always inform other residents about the City's water waste rules, we realize that not everyone is comfortable doing so. There are two ways to report water waste to the City.

1. Call the Water Waste Hotline at (408) 310-4195
2. Report On-line on the City's Website
 - a. Go to morganhill.ca.gov
 - b. Select the "Report A Concern" button (middle of the page on the right side)
 - c. Select the "Report Water Waste" or "Report Water Leak" form and complete the few questions
 - d. Click submit to file the form

I've already conserved water at my home. How am I supposed to conserve 30% more? The City has not passed individual water rationing requirements and realizes that some homes and businesses may be able to conserve more than others. Regardless of improvements residents may have made, it is likely that everyone can do something to conserve water during the drought. Visit www.save20gallons.org for more water saving ideas.

The City uses water, what is the City doing to respond? The City is instituting a long list of measures to reduce its water use during the drought including:

- Reducing the City's landscape irrigation use by over 30%
- Escalating the City's response to water leaks
- Eliminating the use of water in fire drills and training
- Washing fire engines only as necessary
- Evaluating all plumbing fixtures to ensure they are low flow and replacing fixtures as needed at all fire stations
- Modifying fire hydrant testing and maintenance to reduce water consumption
- Adjusting water system flushing schedules
- Reprogramming pool filtration equipment to eliminate unnecessary backwashing operations

- Increasing frequency of irrigation checks to reduce irrigation overspray and minimize water waste in the landscape

Morgan Hill gets its water from the ground. Why are we concerned about low levels in reservoirs and creeks? While the City's wells are still operational, the dry winters recently experienced have reduced the level of water available at the wells. In addition, the lack of water statewide significantly limits the amount of imported water available to the Water District to use in recharging Morgan Hill aquifers.

Where can I see the City's full ordinance? The full ordinance is available on the City's website at <http://www.morganhill.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2359>

Permanent Water Waste Rules in Morgan Hill

1. **Limits on Watering Hours:** Watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water is prohibited between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
2. **Limit on Watering Duration:** Watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water using a landscape irrigation system or a watering device that is not continuously attended is limited to no more than fifteen (15) minutes watering per day per station. This subsection does not apply to landscape irrigation systems that exclusively use very low-flow drip type irrigation systems when no emitter produces more than two (2) gallons of water per hour and weather based controllers or stream rotor sprinklers that meet a 70% efficiency standard.
3. **No Excessive Water Flow or Runoff:** Watering or irrigating of any lawn, landscape or other vegetated area in a manner that causes or allows excessive water flow or runoff onto an adjoining sidewalk, driveway, street, alley, gutter or ditch is prohibited.
4. **No Washing Down Hard or Paved Surfaces:** Washing down hard or paved surfaces, including but not limited to sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking areas, tennis courts, patios or alleys, is prohibited except by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container, a hand-held hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off device, a low-volume, high-pressure cleaning machine equipped to recycle any water used, or a low-volume high-pressure water broom.
5. **Obligation to Fix Leaks, Breaks or Malfunctions:** Excessive use, loss or escape of water through breaks, leaks or other malfunctions in the water user's plumbing or distribution system for any period of time after such escape of water should have reasonably been discovered and corrected and in no event more than ten (10) days of receiving written notice from the city, is prohibited.
6. **Recirculating Water Required for Water Fountains and Decorative Water Features:** Operating a water fountain or other decorative water feature that does not use recirculated water is prohibited.
7. **Limits on Washing Vehicles:** Using water to wash or clean a vehicle, including but not limited to any automobile, truck, van, bus, motorcycle, boat or trailer, whether motorized or not is prohibited, except by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container or a hand-held hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off nozzle or device. This subsection does not apply to any commercial car washing facility.
8. **Drinking Water Served Upon Request Only:** Eating or drinking establishments, including but not limited to a restaurant, hotel, cafe, cafeteria, bar, or other public place where food or drinks are sold, served, or offered for sale, are prohibited from providing drinking water to any person unless expressly requested.
9. **Commercial Lodging Establishments Must Provide Guests Option to Decline Daily Linen Services:** Hotels, motels and other commercial lodging establishments must provide customers the option of not having towels and linen laundered daily. Commercial lodging establishments must prominently display notice of this option in each bathroom using clear and easily understood language.
10. **No Installation of Single Pass Cooling Systems:** Installation of single pass cooling systems is prohibited in buildings requesting new water service.
11. **No Installation of Nonrecirculating in Commercial Car Wash and Laundry Systems:** Installation of nonrecirculating water systems is prohibited in new commercial conveyor car wash and new commercial laundry systems.
12. **Restaurants Required to Use Water Conserving Dish Wash Spray Valves:** Food preparation establishments, such as restaurants or cafes, are prohibited from using non-water conserving dish wash spray valves.
13. **Commercial Car Wash Systems:** Within one year of passage of this ordinance, all commercial conveyor car wash systems must have installed operational recirculating water systems, or must have secured a waiver of this requirement from the city.